



## Healthy Vision

A good education for your child means good schools, good teachers and good vision. Your child's eyes are constantly in use in the classroom and at play. So when his or her vision is not functioning properly, learning and participation in recreational activities will suffer.

### **The basic vision skills needed for school use are:**

- Near vision. The ability to see clearly and comfortably at 10-13 inches.
- Distance vision. The ability to see clearly and comfortably beyond arm's reach.
- Binocular coordination. The ability to use both eyes together.
- Eye movement skills. The ability to aim the eyes accurately, move them smoothly across a page and shift them quickly and accurately from one object to another.
- Focusing skills. The ability to keep both eyes accurately focused at the proper distance to see clearly and to change focus quickly.
- Peripheral awareness. The ability to be aware of things located to the side while looking straight ahead.
- Eye/hand coordination. The ability to use the eyes and hands together.

If any of these or other vision skills is lacking or not functioning properly, your child will have to work harder. This can lead to headaches, fatigue and other eyestrain problems. As a parent, be alert for symptoms that may indicate your child has a vision or visual processing problem.

### **Be sure to tell your doctor if your child frequently:**

- Loses their place while reading
- Avoids close work
- Holds reading material closer than normal
- Tends to rub their eyes
- Has headaches
- Turns or tilts head to use one eye only
- Makes frequent reversals when reading or writing
- Uses finger to maintain place when reading
- Omits or confuses small words when reading
- Consistently performs below potential

Since vision changes can occur without you or your child noticing them, your child's vision should be checked every two years, or more frequently, if specific problems or risk factors exist. If needed, the doctor can prescribe treatment including eyeglasses, contact lenses or vision therapy.



## **Better Hearing and Speech**

This annual observance is when attention is focused on the needs of the millions of individuals from infants to the elderly who suffer from communication disorders.

### **Did you know?**

- 28 million people in the U.S. suffer from hearing loss.
- 16 million people in the U.S. have a speech and/or language disorder.
- Hearing loss is the most common congenital disorder in newborns.
- Ten percent of children entering the first grade have a moderate to severe speech disorder, including stuttering.
- 42 million people in the U.S. suffer from a speech, voice, language, or hearing impairment.

Hearing screening for newborns before they leave the hospital or maternity center is becoming a common practice. Without such programs, the average age of hearing loss identification will stay at 12-25 months.

When hearing loss is detected late, language development is already delayed. Children are more likely to perform below their grade level, and are more likely to be held back, drop out of school, and fail to earn a high school diploma. These consequences are in sharp contrast to those for children who are identified early, receive early intervention, and then are found to function at the level of their peers by the time they enter school.

School-age children should be screened for hearing loss as needed, requested, mandated, or when conditions place them at risk for hearing disability. Screening for hearing loss identifies the school-age children most likely to have hearing impairment that may interfere with development, communication, health, and education. School age children with even minimal hearing loss are at risk for academic and communication difficulties.

### **School age children in Illinois are required to be screened at the following times:**

- on first entry into school.
- every year from kindergarten through 3rd grade.
- upon entrance into special education.
- upon entering a new school system without evidence of having passed a previous hearing screening.